

THE  
RED RIVER  
REBELLION  
G. O. CORBETT  
1870



# "THE RED RIVER REBELLION."

## THE CAUSE OF IT.

IN A SERIES OF

LETTERS TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF  
OPENING THE OVERLAND ROUTE THROUGH RUPEL'S AMERICA  
FROM CANADA TO BRITISH COLUMBIA FOR THE INTRODUCTION  
OF MEANS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE THEREIN  
THE PROMOTION OF EMIGRATION AND URGENT APPEALS TO  
BEAT BLOODSHED IN THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT BY AT-  
TENDING RIGHTEOUS RULE TO THAT COUNTRY.

BY THE

REV. G. O. CORBETT, M.D.,

*Author of "Notes on Rupert's America," 1868, showing the History, Laws, and  
Resources of those Regions; and Author of "A Diary Recording the  
Briefly Dying Testimony of the Rev. H. A. Simcoe," 1870, &c.*

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

LONDON.

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1870.

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History

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History

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following Letters are published to throw light on the discussion in the public papers of what is designated as "The Red River Rebellion." In the *Daily Telegraph* of January 11th, and the *Morning Standard* of January 19th and 20th, we read excellent articles on the subject. In the *Standard* of the 19th appears a very able letter from A. K. Isbister, Esq., barrister, &c., who is quite competent to write on this question. The comments in the *Standard* and *Telegraph* agree in advising the formation of the Red River country into a Crown Colony, the *Standard* showing that the Red River Settlers aver that, although the Canadian Government has given (promised) £300,000 to the Hudson's Bay Company for certain territories, the people are not included in this bargain, seeing that they never were an appanage of the Hudson's Bay Company; that Canada could not buy what it was not the Company's to sell; that, in any case, they ought not to be transferred to a

third power without their leave and consent; that they decline to be sold as a chattel of the Hudson's Bay territory, as the people of Alaska were to the United States; and protest that, if British subjects at all, they are the subjects not of Canada, but of England; that they are a colony of England, and not "a colony of a colony;" that it is a case, in fact, precisely parallel with that of New Zealand, with this difference only—that there is even a clearer responsibility attaching to the mother country, and a stronger right on the part of the loyal subjects of the Crown to claim the interference of the Government; that either they are British subjects, or they are not—if they are, then their allegiance is to England and not to Canada; if they are not, still less right have the Canadians to annex them by violence—to make war, in fact, in the Queen's name, against a people not the Queen's enemies; that the Red River people have "a very reasonable grievance;" that "the matter is a very serious one," and on it hangs not only the peace of our North American territory, but the future of the colonies; &c.; in short, opinions identical with those contained in the subjoined correspondence.

Since posting my last letter to Earl Granville, I



have seen a letter from Red River to a gentleman in London, giving the information that Captain William Hallette and his son were made prisoners by the French; that Dr. Schultz had fled from his premises, and the persons who had guarded his store taken prisoners, and that others were meditating to flee from their homes to some place of safety. The French, knowing well the opinions and dissatisfaction of the English portion of the inhabitants, no doubt, calculated upon their joining them in this movement; and now that some of the English half-breeds are made prisoners this will but exasperate them and kindle a feeling of intenser dissatisfaction with the British Government, for, in fact, having brought about their imprisonment, and all the anxiety, and peril, and possibly bloodshed yet, by its tardy and inadequate line of policy pursued. The fault is a most serious one, and delay will aggravate it, besides its having already held up the rule of the white man to rebuke in the estimation of the aborigines of the soil over all the territory, and lessened the influence of Christianity among them, when it is the manifest design of Divine Providence in raising up Great Britain among the nations to make it the great instrument for spreading the Christian religion over

the globe, for protecting the weak, removing oppression, and fostering civilisation, and especially in such a fine field for immigration as Rupert's America, which has been one of the British dependencies for the last 200 years.

\*\*\* A telegram in this day's paper (*Telegraph*, 24th January) says that those imprisoned at Red River had arrived at Pembina; that the insurgents have started a newspaper, called the *New Nation*, conducted by an American lawyer, and declares the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company to be absolute. This gives confirmation to recent articles in the *Morning Advertiser*. But will a section of the Hudson's Bay Company's agents assume such a basis after getting the promise of payment for relinquishing their assumed status? I trow not. Yet some of them are influential Americans. Another telegram announces that the Hudson's Bay Company at present recognise this new government of the people. Wherefore? Carried before the current? Or how has such an association come about? A telegram just arrived confirms the avowed political purpose of the Red River insurgents, which is—the establishment of independence, with a view of ultimate annexation to the United States; and that copies of their new organ, the *New Nation*, have arrived in London.—*Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 28th. A special telegram also appears in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Jan. 29th, and an important article in the *Weekly Times* of the same day, on the "Red River Rebellion."

# "THE RED RIVER REBELLION:"

THE CAUSE OF IT,

Sr. Sr.

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The Rectory, Sandy, Bedfordshire,

August 25th, 1868.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,—I beg leave most respectfully to enclose and forward, per this day's post, my Letter and "Notes on Rupert's America," addressed to your Grace, in print, in the hope that in this form they may receive your approval, and advance the cause at heart.

I have the honour to be,

Your Grace's most obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT.

To his Grace the Duke of Buckingham,

Her Majesty's Secretary for the Colonies,  
Colonial Office, Downing Street, London.

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Colonial Office,

August 27th, 1868.

REVEREND SIR,—I am desired by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos to acknowledge, with his thanks, the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, and of a copy of your "Notes on Rupert's America."

Your obedient servant,

H. S. BRYANT.

The Rev. G. O. Corbett.

*Acknowledgment from the Secretary of State of Canada.*

Canada, Ottawa,

Oct. 17th, 1868.

REVEREND SIR,—I am directed by the Honourable the Secretary of State of Canada to acknowledge, with his most sincere thanks, the receipt of your "Notes on Rupert's America, its History and Resources, &c.," and to assure you that the subject of this valuable publication will draw his particular attention.

I have the honour to be, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

E. PAREUR,

Under Secretary of State.

The Rev. G. O. Corbett, M.D., &c.

Penheale Manor, Launceston, Cornwall,

October 26th, 1868.

MY LORD DUKE,—Since receiving your Grace's acknowledgment of the 27th August, of the receipt of my "Notes on Rupert's America," the intelligence has been received—of which, perhaps, your Grace is aware—of the reappearance of the grasshoppers at the Red River Settlement, causing almost a famine out there, as is shown by the enclosed paper, No. I. And very likely your Grace is also aware of the Memorial of the 1st ultimo, signed by several noblemen and members of Parliament, and presented to the Prime Minister, on the importance of setting apart Reserves for the Indians to advance their Christian Settlement, and secure the peace of the frontier. At the time I last had the honour of addressing your Grace, I had little expectation of the

afore-mentioned calamity abroad, and knew nothing of this movement at home; and your Grace will scarcely fail to trace in these and other independent circumstances the call of Divine Providence to those in authority, to ameliorate the condition of the inhabitants of those regions, as already earnestly appealed for by my "Notes on Rupert's America," and supported by fresh evidence embodied in the enclosed papers, Nos. II. and III. Ten years ago the Select Committee of the House of Commons recommended that settlements should be planted along the line of route pointed out in my "Notes on Rupert's America," and indicated in that work at page 4. Had this been done, there would probably have existed at this moment flourishing settlements, with supplies at hand to meet the urgent necessities of the Red River people, without entailing upon them now about 1,000 miles of overland travel to a foreign market. And although very properly subscriptions are solicited from benevolent individuals, through the public press, to mitigate the evil—and as I have myself travelled in that vicinity and in Minnesota day by day, over a distance of 300 miles, which was swarming with grasshoppers, and on other accounts, I can realise the sadness of the present case, and with deep emotion plead for a colony which has been just plunged into great destitution—yet I believe that the really practical subscription called for is the opening of those parts by the formation of new colonies therein. It is, I think, evident to your Grace, that any settlement which is isolated some 500 miles from the civilised world may, at any moment, from many causes, have its balance of supplies destroyed without the chance of replenishing

its stock from colonies contiguous thereto, and I assume it must also be evident, that to keep a settlement so situated is to retain it feeble for every useful purpose—feeble to maintain the frontier, feeble to aid in developing the resources of the country, feeble in affording supplies to outlying missionary stations or young colonies, and, what is paramount to every other consideration, thereby perpetuating its dependence on the mother country for the sustentation of the ministrations of religion, and paralysing its energies in spreading Christianity in the land.

Surely, your Grace, it would add new lustre to the Crown and honour to her Majesty's Ministers, to respond with prompt and benevolent measures to this call, and discharge the debt so long due to that territory; and if greater arguments are required to show either the urgency of this summons, or to demonstrate the immense commercial advantages that would accrue to our own country, by instantly putting forth the energies of our native isle—like that which was so nobly displayed in carrying forward the recent Abyssinian Expedition—by immediately opening this overland route from Lake Superior to the Red River, and thence to the Rocky Mountains and British Columbia, I beg most respectfully also to append the enclosed papers, Nos. IV., V., and VI., for your Grace's information.

I have the honour to be, my Lord Duke,

Your Grace's most obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT, Clerk, M.D.

To his Grace the Duke of Buckingham and

Chandos, K.G., &c., Her Majesty's

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

## PAPER No. I.

See appeals for aid to lessen this calamity in the *Times*, September 10th and 16th, and in the *Star*, September 18th, 19th, and 25th, and in the *Canadian News*, September 17th and 24th. The extent of it is set forth in the appeal in the *Nor'-Wester* of August 7th in these words:—"We have had the customary fruits of the earth entirely cut off by a plague of grasshoppers, and, instead of our usual abundance, we shall reap nothing, absolutely nothing, in the shape of wheat, barley, rye, or oats." And this statement is confirmed by letters which appeared in that journal of August 11th, from the French R. C. Bishop, thus:—"I have to certify that in your issue of the 4th instant the following statement is not exaggerated, 'That within the whole colony not one bushel of any kind of grain will be harvested, and that the potato crop will be very meagre also.' Yes, everything is destroyed by the grasshoppers; neither grain nor vegetables of any kind are to be found in our gardens or fields. Moreover, the buffalo hunters, instead of furnishing their large share of provisions and leather, arrived starving from their usual hunting-grounds. Many, during their long excursions through the plains, were reduced to eat their yoke of oxen, or even their horses, and they are now in our midst without a morsel of food." From Archdeacon Mac Lean:—"Having visited from La Prairie to the Indian Settlement, I have seen the sad evidence of the total ruin of the crops," &c. From the Rev. J. Black, Presbyterian Minister:—"There can be no question as to the destruction of the crops of the settlement by the grasshoppers. I understand that the buffalo hunt has proved an entire failure, and thus both the great sources of our food supply are cut off at the same time." From the Rev. George Young, Wesleyan Minister:—"I have recently visited La Prairie, and, with the exception of two or three small patches of peas and a few late-planted potatoes, there is nothing growing between that place and this (sixty miles) on all the beautiful farms, save grass and reeds."

In the *Times*, October 16th, a letter also appears from the present Bishop of Rupert's Land, dated from Quebec,

September 30th, which was written for the express purpose of confirming the statements respecting the calamity from the reappearance of the grasshoppers, and of strengthening the appeal to England for assistance. In the said letter, the Bishop adds, that the settlement is 500 miles from any railway station, that the Canadian Government will expend some £3,000 towards opening out a road in that direction, yet it will be of little service; that a tornado has also passed over the settlement, unroofing houses and farms, and removing the spire of St. Andrew's; and that a hard, long winter is at hand for that isolated and distressed community.

#### No. II.

"The policy of the monopolists has been to discourage settlement, to leave their concession as much as possible to a state of nature, to promote hunting and the arts of savage life, and to frown down any approach to civilised pursuits and all introduction of enterprise. A mine of wealth lies at their feet ready to be got, if they had some of the zeal of the earlier discoverers, and the desire to benefit the human race, as well as to draw dividends for themselves."—*Star*, September 9th, 1868.

#### No. III.

"The country is like a nobleman's estate in England, Scotland, or Ireland; there are the woods, the groves, the lakes, and the rivers. When spring comes you can put your plough to work and plant potatoes under the soil; then plough and harrow, and the first rain sow broadcast your turnip seed, and your beans you can plant by making a hole with your axe, covering it with your foot. Thus you have a crop the first autumn you come, with your ground ready for wheat, barley, or oats the next spring, with wood all round you growing for fencing or for making your houses and stables. What an advantage over Canada and the Northern States! *There* you have to clear a farm of heavy timber, which takes nearly a lifetime, and often passes through many hands before it is finished. Our subsoil is clay, with a rich black mould on the surface, much like the land along the banks of the Minnesota River



to Fort Redgway, which produces thirty-five to forty bushels to the acre."

Dated Red River, August 5th, 1868, and appeared in the *Times*, 10th September, 1868.

#### No. IV.

"The U. S. Pacific Railway.—Whilst the genius of the great North-West is sitting, like Patience on a monument, waiting to develop the resources and to rouse her from the posture of masterly inactivity, our enterprising neighbours at the South are carrying to a rapid completion, not only the greatest work of the age, but the greatest of any age. The pyramids of Egypt are regarded as the most stupendous works of antiquity, but they dwindle into nothingness, when compared to the American Pacific Railway. During one of the most terrible civil wars that the world has seen, the American nation chartered and granted aid towards this great highway, and it has already been completed through the Rocky Mountains, and is rapidly pushing on towards the City of the Saints, Salt Lake. From the Pacific coast the road has been pushed on with equal vigour, and the Californians have already passed the Sierra Nevada Mountains, on the way towards the East, and it is confidently expected that a junction will be effected during the year 1869. And then the Americans will bid for a great portion of the commerce of the world—a route which will become the source of untold riches and prosperity to Uncle Sam.

"British statesmanship is said to be slow, but sure. Alas! we find it so in our case. Slow, slow, and tardy, like the progress of the Car of Juggernaut. And shall we carry the simile further by saying that by the dead weight of its inactivity, and, as far as this country is concerned, its obtuseness of legislation, it is crushing to the earth a young, and, what might be, a rising country? We trust the day is far distant when any other than the meteor flag of England shall remind us of our allegiance; but if they are determined at home to consider Great Britain and Ireland the summum bonum of the whole empire; if they are determined to ignore their great colonial responsibility; they must not be surprised if, within the next decade,

they shall find their commerce crippled, their colonies enfeebled, and their prestige decaying. To build a railroad to the Pacific, the Americans have had to encounter difficulties that would be unknown in carrying a road through this territory—a fact admitted by the most competent engineers of both nations. We suppose that the British Parliament will take the matter into consideration some time within the century, but by that time they will have learned the great danger, therefore——”&c.

Published at Red River, the *Nor'-Wester*, July 31st, 1868.

#### No. V.

“In the *Times* of the 6th instant we are told of the commerce of China amounting, in 1866, to 101 millions sterling. England's share reached 88 millions, whilst that of the United States was under 2 millions. I am sorry to say that a very different account will be rendered for 1867. In January of that year a magnificent line of American steamers was put on between San Francisco, Japan, and China, by means of which the merchants of New York are now successfully competing with those of London for the whole trade, and with the great disadvantage of transfers, at San Francisco, Panama, and Aspinwall. If such is the case now, what will be the effect when the new Pacific Railroad, two years hence, connects San Francisco and New York, as the lighter produce, such as tea, &c., must take this route, which will bring New York within thirty days of Hong Kong, and London about forty days? Then, not only will the Shares of the Peninsula and Oriental Company be a drug in the market, but our Chinese business must fall into the hands of the Americans, and New York become the entrepôt of that trade which has cost so much blood and treasure to attach to our shores. The only means of averting such a loss is to open up a route of our own through British America, connecting Vancouver's Island with Montreal and Halifax. This line of country, through which the British railroad would pass, is far superior to that over which the American rails are laid; and then, instead of an emigration of 200,000 souls per annum—a

vast proportion of whom swell the ranks of the evil disposed to us in the U. S.—might at the same time supply the necessary labour, settle the country, open an independent route, add to our resources, and their desires for land would be gratified to the utmost. In this, that writer adds, the real solution of the alleged Irish grievance exists," &c.

#### No. VI.

The rapid progress of the American Pacific Railway.—“We wind away down the western slope to Rock Creek, 2,180 miles from Boston and 1,220 miles from San Francisco. Here our journey ends, but not our wonder. We leave the car and walk rapidly forward to where they are laying the track, and a few of us go still further to see the process of laying the ties. The materials are brought on flat cars by locomotives to very near the end of the track, and are then unloaded on the ground. The train is then backed out of the way. The ties are loaded upon wagons, and carried to the place where they are to be used, which is generally from half a mile to a mile from the point where they were first unloaded. The rails, spikes, bolts, &c., are loaded upon horse cars, which are then driven with the horses upon a run to the end of the track. As soon as the car stops, a foot say from the end of the track, six men on each side immediately seize a rail, slide it forward, and drop it in very near the place where it is to lie, and, without stopping to drive a single spike, the car is immediately run forward upon the rails just laid; the same process is repeated. Two more rails deposited, the car is quickly drawn forward upon them, two more are laid, and so on until the car is unloaded. It is then tipped from the track, and a loaded car is drawn forward to be unloaded in the same way, when the first is put back upon the track and returns for another load. It must not be supposed, however, that these rails lie long without being spiked; on the contrary, the car has hardly passed over them before spikers, bolters, &c., are at work upon them, and such is the force employed that the rails are spiked as fast as they are laid, so that you have only to see how fast the men drop the rails from the car to know the rate at which the track is

being completed. I stood with my watch in my hand, and saw them lay four rails in a minute, again and again. Sometimes they did a little more than that in a single minute. In one instance an average of three rails per minute were laid for five consecutive minutes. This is in excess, however, of their average work, the progress being from two and a half to four miles per day. About 450 men are employed in laying ties and rails. These men are boarded in cars fitted up for the purpose, and which move forward as the work progresses, so that they have their home with them constantly. We dined in one of these cars, and while some of us were still eating, the long train was run down upon a track that had been laid since our arrival an hour before.

"The dinner was furnished by the chief of the Messrs. Casement. General Casement assured us that by the 15th December next the track will be laid to Salt Lake, about 410 miles from Rock Creek; and one who has seen the wonderful process of laying this track over the Rocky Mountains can believe it."—*New York Christian Advocate*, quoted in *Nor'-Wester*, July 31st, 1868.

Penheale Manor, Launceston, Cornwall.

Nov. 7th, 1868.

MY LORD DUKE,—In addition to my letter and enclosures to your Grace on the 26th ultimo, I very respectfully beg leave to transmit the annexed extract, marked No. VII., and humbly ask that it may receive the attention it merits, and give weight to the arguments already adduced for the opening and emancipation of Rupert's America.

I have the honour to be,

Your Grace's most obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT, Clerk, M.D.

To his Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos,  
Her Majesty's Secretary of State  
for the Colonies, &c.

## No. VII.

The circumstances of the case are extremely plain. A party of nine Indians, headed by one Wolverine, attempted to break into a store in charge of William A. Salmon, an American, in the morning of the 28th May, 1868. Young Salmon undertook to put them out after they had effected an entrance, and Wolverine deliberately shot him in the breast. The wounded man was brought down to this town that he might have medical assistance. He lingered until the 7th of June following, when death came to his relief. Remember, he died in our very midst, in a house then occupied by Mr. Devlin. But did our Authorities\* bestir themselves in the matter? Did they hold an inquest as to the probable cause of his death? No, no, no. Positively no notice was taken of the affair by them. About one year afterwards, Mr. Hugh Olone attempted to bring the matter before the Government,† and he was asked if he could swear that Wolverine did it. Mr. O. could not positively swear, as he was not an eye witness, but there were plenty of witnesses to be found, and they can be found now. Look to it, gentlemen, and do not let it be said that an American can be coolly murdered within your jurisdiction, and no steps be taken to punish his slayer. Justice cries among us that the blood of William A. Salmon is yet unavenged by our criminal laws.‡

Downing Street,

Nov. 9th, 1868.

SIR,—I am directed by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th of last month, on subjects connected with the Red River Settlement.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

FREDERIC ROGERS.

G. O. Corbett, Clerk, Esq., M.D.

\* The Hudson's Bay Company's Agents. † *Idem*.

‡ From the *Nor'-Wester* at Red River, Sept. 8, 1868.

Downing Street,

Nov. 20, 1868.

SIR,—I am directed by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos to acknowledge the receipt of your further letter, of the 7th of this month, on the subject of the murder of an American citizen in the Red River Settlement.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

FREDERIC ROGERS.

G. O. Corbett, Clerk, Esq., M.D.

Penheale Manor, Launceston, Cornwall.

Feb. 2nd, 1869.

SIR,—I lately sent you a copy of my "Notes on Rupert's America" (a pamphlet which I had transmitted to the Colonial Office), and other papers bearing on the same subject, a short time prior to your accession to the office as the Prime Minister of Her Majesty's Government. I was all the more prompted in sending this work to you because of your having paid some attention to the subject; for I remember your sitting in the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Territory, in 1857, when I was examined thereon by the said Committee as a witness. And I do now herein most respectfully and earnestly appeal to you to investigate and redress the wrongs, and carry out the measures which are imperatively called for in behalf of those vast regions; and I can only add

that I shall be happy if I can in any way facilitate these projects.

I remain, Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT, Clerk, M.D.

To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.,

Her Majesty's Prime Minister of State, &c. &c.

10, Downing Street, Whitehall,

Feb. 9th, 1869.

SIR,—I am directed by Mr. Gladstone to thank you for the copy of your "Notes on Rupert's America."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ALGERNON WEST.

Rev. G. O. Corbett.

Penheale Manor, Launceston, Cornwall.

April 6th, 1869.

MY LORD,—It is reported in the newspapers that Her Majesty's Government is on the eve of offering to pay over to the Hudson's Bay Company a large sum of money for their alleged rights, and at the same time to guarantee certain important reservations; in reference to which I most respectfully beg leave to inquire whether your Lordship is aware of the fact that the late Governor from abroad of this Company is defendant in an action now pending in the Courts of Westminster, which brings up for judicial inquiry the assumed status of that body?

I scarcely believe that the British Government or Parliament would take any step which would interfere with the freedom of the courts of the realm, or in the least sway or suspend the decisions of the

judges until the cause shall be legally settled; or that it would for a moment, in any degree, in effect, pay a large sum of money over to the defendant or his colleagues, or those he represents, without at the same time providing satisfaction for the plaintiff also.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,  
Your Lordship's obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT, Clerk.

To the Right Hon. Earl Granville, M.P., &c.,  
Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies,  
Colonial Office, 14, Downing Street, London.

Downing Street,

April 26th, 1869.

SIR,—I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, and to inform you in reply that his Lordship does not find in it any reason for altering the course adopted by Government in relation to the Hudson's Bay Company.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

D. MONSELL.

G. O. Corbett, Clerk, Esq., M.D.

Penheale House, Launceston, Cornwall.

May 7th, 1868.

MY LORD,—In reference to your Lordship's letter of the 26th ultimo, I most respectfully beg leave to state that I have no wish "for altering the course adopted by Government in relation to the Hudson's Bay Company," but rather herein express my deep thankfulness for the energy and decision with which Her Majesty's Government appears to be taking up



the question, as I understand it, to place all matters relating to that great territory on a proper foundation. And, with the view of assisting your Lordship in executing and perfecting all the arrangements respecting that country upon an equitable footing in regard to all parties interested, I would herein respectfully recapitulate, and submit further information. In my "Notes on Rupert's America," forwarded to the Colonial Office August 25th, 1868, and acknowledged by his Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos on August 27th, 1868, I believe that, among other things of moment, it is very clearly shown in that pamphlet that the Hudson's Bay Company have no territorial rights in the North-West or Hudson's Bay regions, and that the Government and Parliament can at any time enter into that territory, and erect its own buildings, and appoint its own Government, judges, and other officers, and establish colonies, and open roads for communication irrespective of the aforesaid trading firm;—and that said Company's posts, and the houses of the settlers, and the posts of the various trading firms out there, and, in short, all the inhabitants, would be at once subject to such Government. And, if one or more posts or forts of the Hudson's Bay Company, or one or more posts of the other traders, Canadian or American therein, or one or more buildings of any of the settlers, were required for Government purposes, the same might be purchased at its worth from the respective owners thereof. But it is hardly probable that any such purchase would have to be made, because the space of unoccupied country is so great that the Government might at any moment occupy the choicest sites without any hindrance, and erect its own independent

works; for the case is much the same as if there were only three trading posts in the whole of the United Kingdom, with a mere sprinkling of an aboriginal population—say one post in England, another in Scotland, and a third in Ireland, with here and there in addition a post or two of other traders, or a settler's farm—one and all of them on a like footing, inasmuch as the last and only status of the Hudson's Bay Company merely existed on a limited and conditional licence, which the Crown refused to renew at its expiry in 1859. And, my Lord, such resumption of rights and entrance therein by the Government or Parliament has already been done, to wit, in Vancouver's Island and the regions west of the Rocky Mountains, where, in like manner, the Hudson's Bay Company's status was simply on the basis of a licensed trading firm, and where, just as in Rupert's America, their shares might be held and their trade carried on with full prosperity, and without let or hindrance or any real detriment to the shareholders, just as well *after* such assertion and entrance therein by the Crown as before. Were the Government, indeed, to purchase the stock and trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, that would be quite another thing, and a ground of payment to that body. But I am not aware that there is at present any such proposition before your Lordship, nor any intention otherwise to interfere with their trade than, as I should hope, to regulate fairly all such trade, and to bring all traders under a just licence, imposing suitable conditions, and a moderate payment, on a scale proportionate to the capital employed, whether by firms or by individuals of whatever name, for the good and security of the poor Indians, and for a

source of revenue towards opening and improving the country. And here, my Lord, need I remark on the necessity of means for properly opening that territory? And now grant me permission to inquire why the money now proposed to be paid to the Hudson's Bay Company should not be reserved for the benefit and development of those regions, not only on account of the urgent call for an outlay therein (and, for the reasons above named, that said Company have really no territorial rights there), but also because their alleged status is this moment challenged before the courts of the realm? And, in further illustration, and for the careful scrutiny of your Lordship into the gravity of the subject, I would respectfully cite the fact of the incompetence of the Hudson's Bay Company to give legal title-deeds for the conveyance of land to any person in that country and to the settlers at the Red River Settlement. There are hundreds and hundreds of settlers out there who this moment have no title to their land save that they occupy and farm their respective lots. They have not, and cannot get, legal land deeds. There is one class of settlers who have paid down more or less money to the Hudson's Bay Company's agents there, and hold a receipt for the amount; and there is another class of settlers who have paid nothing at all, and who refuse to pay anything until the rightful party shall come forward and legally assign the lands to them. The former class some time ago declined the acceptance of the sort of title-deed which the Hudson's Bay Company's agents proposed; but the said class gave preference even to an unstamped receipt from the said agents as evidence of the amount paid, and prayed meanwhile

for the Government's interference; whilst the latter class deemed it best to wait absolutely until the imperial Parliament should set the whole matter right. And perhaps it will not be out of place for me to add at this stage that I myself might be ranked with the former class of the community, because I have land under cultivation out there, and have paid a certain sum of money thereon to the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, for which I hold the receipt, but for which I hold no title-deed, and I have been advised that the Hudson's Bay Company cannot give me a legal deed, and that it is useless to accept any instrument short of that. And my own case does but represent the situation of several thousand inhabitants at Red River, and in respect to which your Lordship will allow me to ask—Will Her Majesty's Government make such arrangements with the Hudson's Bay Company as shall ignore the rights of the settlers at Red River, and persons in other parts of the territory—rights acquired in most cases by occupation and improvement, and in many instances by payment also? Will the Government guarantee payment to the Hudson's Bay Company for their alleged territorial claims, and allow them to keep the money which they have also already received from the settlers? or thus sanction a double payment—that is to say, from the Government and the settlers, and for that also for which they have no legal right? And will the Government so tie up the present arrangements as practically to throw the burthen on the struggling settler, to recover his rights as he may best be able through the courts of law—an undertaking next to impossible against

such a body, and removed, as he is at Red River, several hundred miles from the Courts of Canada, which, in truth, are the nearest legal courts to him for redress? Moreover, my Lord, I very respectfully beg leave also to state frankly that, by virtue of a suit at present pending in the Courts of Westminster, the Hudson's Bay Company's jurisdiction is necessarily involved for judicial inquiry, and that the cause assumes large proportions, and unavoidably comprises the standing and interests of many individuals. The writ commencing this suit was served on the defendant, a chief agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, early in December, 1864, by Messrs. Ashley and Tee, 1A, Frederick's Place, Old Jewry, Cheapside, London, and said firm have continued to instruct counsel in the unremitting pursuance of the cause to the present day; and such counsel as Mr. John MacNabb, of Upper Canada, Mr. W. M. James, Q.C.,\* Mr. Philbrick, Mr. Atkinson, and Mr. Francis Turner, of London, have been engaged in points connected with the case; and Mr. Francis Turner still has the conduct of it, under the instructions of the aforesaid firm of solicitors; and the belief is entertained that every effort has been made by defendant's side to delay the proceedings, and, if possible, prevent the cause from being heard, and that the final judgment of the Court is sought to be warded off until after the Imperial Government shall have arranged to pay over to the aforesaid Company the present large sum of money asked for; but, as the cause is now so far advanced as to be set down for trial, it is evident that the judgment of the Court on an important constitutional question, which unavoidably

\* Since raised to the rank of a Judge in the Superior Courts.

comes up through this action, must soon be given, and therefore I most respectfully submit, whether Her Majesty's Government ought not, at the very least, to suspend payment of any money to the Hudson's Bay Company, or making arrangements therefor, until after the aforesaid judgment shall have been delivered in the usual place, or the matter satisfactorily settled.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,  
Your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,  
G. O. CORBETT, Clerk in Holy Orders.  
To Earl Granville, M.P., &c.,  
Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies,  
Colonial Office, Downing Street, London.

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Downing Street,  
May 21st, 1869.

SIR,—I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant, on matters connected with the transfer to the Crown of the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, in British North America.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
F. R. SANDFORD.  
The Rev. G. O. Corbett.

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Wolford Lodge,  
Honiton, Devon,

July 14th, 1869.

MY LORD,—I respectfully beg leave to subjoin a copy of a summons served on a respectable British subject at Red River by the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to state that said subject was

imprisoned by the said Company's officers, notwithstanding his protest against its illegality.

May I inquire whether the Colonial Department will accord to things being done abroad in the name of "the Public" instead of that of our most gracious Queen, and whether a British subject is to be dragged from his family to prison in such an illegal manner, where he is situated, as I pointed out in my last communication, so far from every legal officer or legal court as to be practically without redress, and whether your Lordship can pass by silently, whilst upholding and acting in the name of the Queen, such proceedings any longer?

I remain, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

G. O. CORBETT.

To Earl Granville, M.P., &c.,

Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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COPY OF SUMMONS.

Middle District Court.

To James Stewart.

I hereby order you to appear in the Court of this district the 19th day of April to answer the Public for selling spirits without a licence.

A. G. BANNATYNE,

R. R. S., April 13th, 1869.

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Downing Street,

August 3rd, 1869.

SIR,—I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th ultimo,

respecting a summons alleged to have been served on a British subject in territory belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, for selling spirits without a licence.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. R. SANDFORD.

8, Harewood Street, Harewood Square,  
Marylebone, N.W., Nov. 27th, 1869.

MY LORD,—I beg leave to submit to your Lordship's notice the subjoined extracts from the *Daily Telegraph* of the 18th and 24th instant:—"The French residents in the Red River country have armed and banded themselves together to resist the cession of their territory to Canada. They forcibly compelled the Governor, Mr. McDougall, to cross into the Dakotah territory, where he now awaits armed assistance or instructions from the Canadian Government." "The Red River insurgents of Winnipeg territory, 600 strong, have seized Fort Garry," &c.

Both in my "Notes on Rupert's America," in 1868, and in my letters since addressed to the Colonial Office, I have been pointing out that such uprisings would likely take place, unless Her Majesty's Government made such arrangements as would establish that colony on a satisfactory basis.

From several years' acquaintance with the people out there, I know that they have constantly felt utterly disgusted with the way in which justice has been administered; that they consider they ought to have a share in electoral privileges, like other colonies; that they have landed claims which



have been ignored; and that the transaction which the British Government has recently made with the Hudson's Bay Company in regard to that country practically involves the admission of perpetuating the old one-sided policy, and of compensating not merely *one* party, but also the party who has *no* right to such compensation, and hence the revolution now transpiring in those regions.

May I remind your Lordship that the Red River people hold the key to the heart of that continent along the frontier, midway from ocean to ocean; that they are composed in part of the American people flowing over the border, and largely composed of those who are related by blood and united by one common interest to the Indian chiefs and tribes over the whole territory; and that, therefore, complexity on the question of the International Boundary Line on the one hand, and a great Indian war on the other, may now follow?

Had justice been granted to that people in accordance with the pleadings of every true friend of that country, the present risk of life and property, and the grave errors in the administration of our colonial department, would have been prevented.

As it is, if Her Majesty's Government decide on sending out troops to Red River, by which route will they be transported? There are but two now generally used: one by Hudson's Bay, which will not be open for navigation till next summer; and the other is through the United States of America, for which much time might be consumed in obtaining permission, which, in a time of war with that country, could not be secured. This, again, points to the importance of opening the overland route, embracing

what one writer\* designates "The Great Wheat Belt;" a fact, laid such stress upon by the Convention of Delegates for British Columbia in their meeting at Yale, that they made it a *sine quâ non* that, ere their country should be united to the dominion of Canada, this overland route should be completed as soon as possible.†

My Lord, I again most respectfully urge, on behalf of the honour of our own country, and on behalf of the people of those parts, that Her Majesty's Government will stay bloodshed, and root out deep-seated dissatisfaction, by extending justice to them, and acting on the principle of the Royal Law of Heaven, that we should do unto others as we would be done by ourselves.

I remain, my Lord,

Your Lordship's humble and obedient servant,

G. O. CORBETT, Clerk, M.D.

To the Right Hon. Earl Granville, M.P., &c.,

Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies,  
Downing Street, W.

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8, Titchfield Terrace, Regent's Park Road,

Dec. 28th, 1869.

MY LORD,—Since my letter to your Lordship on the 27th ultimo, I find the newspapers repeat that the Red River people are still in arms; that Governor McDougall was organising a force of Indians on the United States' territory against this attitude; and that the Red River people are determined to resist, and have issued a declaration of independence, and

\* Mr. Greeley.

† Nor'-Wester, Sept. 7th, 1869.

assert that their own Provincial Government is the only lawful authority in the country.\*

It is not unlikely that, as the Red River people believe that the present Prime Minister has manifested heretofore an intimate acquaintance with and interest in the condition of that territory, and that the present Government engages to side liberally with the voice of the people—that these have tended to aggravate the evil and intensify their indignation, seeing that their own voice and petitions have been so completely set aside.

In concluding this stage of my communications to your Lordship's department (during the last twelve years I have been pressing the British Government to accord righteous rule to that country), I respectfully ask your Lordship whether there is any objection to my publishing the correspondence which has passed between me and the Colonial Office on the subject?

I remain, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT, M.D.

To the Right Hon. Earl Granville, K.G., &c. &c.,

Her Majesty's Chief Secretary of State  
for the Colonies, &c.

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Downing Street,

Jan. 15th, 1870.

SIR,—I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ultimo, and to inform you that his Lordship has not the

\* *Daily Telegraph*, Dec. 27th, 1869.

slightest objection to your publishing your correspondence with this department.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

FREDERIC ROGERS.

The Rev. G. O. Corbett.

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S, Titchfield Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W.

Jan. 18th, 1870.

MY LORD,—I had not intended to write your Lordship so soon again, but the gravity of the contents of a letter which I have just received from Red River presses on me to do so, which informs me that a body of 600 of the French, in arms, guarded the road between Red River and Pembina, who sent word to Governor M'Dougall that if he attempted to come in he would be shot; that the mail was stopped and opened, private property taken possession of, and all parties and goods coming in were seized and opened; and after this they marched down and took possession of Fort Garry, with the ammunition and guns, and are still there in large numbers; that the Rapids people took possession of the Stone Fort; that a large force of Sioux Indians were at the Portage; and that every preparation was going forward for fighting; and, after expressing fears of detailing more in case this letter should be opened, the writer concludes: "If war commences here, God only knows how it will end; for most of the French are half-Indians, and, Indian fashion, may revenge on the women and children. We may be all killed before any troops can reach us from Canada. The French have no design to injure the English, but they demand certain privileges."

In the *Daily Telegraph* this morning I read this telegram: "Advices from Pembina to the 3rd inst. received at Chicago state that a large band of Sioux Indians was near Fort Garry, and it was apprehended that they would attack the insurgents or commit depredations on the frontier of the Red River Settlement; and it is reported that the insurgents have seized £200,000 belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company."

My Lord, I believe that the grievance shared in by the great body of the people is one *in common*. The French, naturally quick, rise in arms in intense anger at the arrangement made by the British Government, and defy the carrying out of such terms, and take the reins of government into their own hands; whilst the English side of the community, in truth not less indignant, but naturally slower, resolve on waiting before abandoning the British flag, and for the time repudiate the French way of manifesting their anger; and hence some of the English side are either taken prisoners or threatened. But this cool and loyal attitude on the part of the English and Scotch half-breeds should not be construed into indifference; for the very men who have been taken prisoners or threatened have ever recorded their abhorrence of the old system, and written and petitioned for the recognition of their rights and the introduction of a just form of government. For example, such men as Mr. James Stewart, a Scotchman, who has been dragged from his family and made a prisoner by the French, and Captain William Hallette, an English half-breed, whose name is a tower of strength, who has been at the head of a hundred battles, and who is very influential on

both sides and with the Indians, threatens (which he would certainly carry out) to shoot the first man who would interfere with his freedom—both of whom abide by the British flag. But this loyal feeling and coolness on the one side, and quickness on the other (I believe in heart most of the French are loyal, only their natural vivacity and anger precipitate them into instant hostilities) is not to be trifled with. In the main, the people out there believe that certain Acts of Parliament so defined their status as to remove all power from the Hudson's Bay Company to hold any courts of law; that that body had no proprietary rights in the soil; that it was reduced, or it was made clear by said Acts of Parliament, to the mere footing of a company of traders under a licence; that in virtue of the Act enabling the Crown to issue such licence, it might also issue licences to fifty or a hundred other companies; that the Hudson's Bay Company received such licence on conditions, one of which was that they came under a penal bond of £5,000 restricting them from trying causes and prisoners, and limiting such proceedings to the courts of Canada or Westminster; that such condition the Company has violated, and thereby ruined individuals and families; that the British Government has allowed these things to go on; that the time came for the expiration of their licence, when they stood as an unlicensed body of traders, like the rest in the country; that the people and their children and the natives solely have rights in the soil, and have constantly repudiated the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company thereto; that the judgments recorded in Canadian courts of law and the history of that country have ever been declarative against the preten-

sions of the Hudson's Bay Company; but that in the face of all this the Canadian Government consents to pay the Hudson's Bay Company £300,000 in money and to their having reserves in land, and the Imperial Government gives a guarantee for it—the Canadian Government thus reversing the policy incorporated with the past history of Canada, and relinquishing the ground occupied by its ancient inhabitants, and ignoring the legal status which both the Acts of the Imperial Parliament and the past judges of the courts of Canada alike maintained. May I ask your Lordship, is it, then, any wonder that the people should rise in arms at Red River, and drive back Governor M'Dougall, who was deputed thither by the Canadian Government, and who had come to England previously as one of the two Canadian statesmen, and consented to such an arrangement?

My Lord, the people out there believe that the Hudson's Bay Company is not entitled to one penny, *for they have parted with nothing*; that if any party is entitled to anything it is themselves; and that any money payments or privileges concurred in by the Canadian or British Governments, beyond acknowledging the rights of the people and the natives, should be laid out in opening up and improving the country.

Now that the storm has burst, it may gather other elements in its course; but, from a long acquaintance with that country, I believe I have stated the pith of the case.

My Lord, I believe that the British Government should at once firmly occupy Red River, and grant the people title-deeds to the lands they occupy, and

establish a proper form of government; that it should plant settlements between Red River and Canada—for instance, at Rainy River; and that it should form a colony in the Saskatchewan Valley, and thus connect British Columbia with this line of settlements (of increased importance, as it is now petitioning for union with the United States), and open the overland route on British soil. I read in Cassell's "Illustrated Travels" for this month that by the Pacific Railroad a merchant came across the continent of North America, from ocean to ocean, in six days, seventeen hours, and twenty-three minutes,\* and a report of a meeting of the Royal Colonial Society, registered in this day's paper, adds further confirmation to the facilities which exist for such a road across from Upper Canada to Red River, and thence to the Valley of the Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

G. O. CORBETT.

To the Right Hon. Earl Granville, K.G., &c. &c.,

Her Majesty's Secretary of State  
for the Colonies, &c. &c.

\* Distance—3,300 miles.